

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# All the Year Round

A Weekly Journal  
CONDUCTED BY  
**CHARLES DICKENS**

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
"Household Words"

No. 456. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 25, 1877.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## STRANGE WATERS.

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BOOK I.

CHAPTER II. TRIFLE.

THE great prima donna, on hearing her own name mentioned, sent a far-reaching glance from end to end of the long table. She knew, no doubt from experience, the power of her name even in remote village inns; there were brigands and robbers in the world, who would have let her go for no ransom but a song. But her long glance came back to her disappointed. The representatives of the people of Laxton did not spring to their feet en masse, leap on the forms and the table, wave their hats and cheer. They sat and stared at her, and some buried their faces in the pewter—drinking doubtfully to their own healths, but certainly not in her honour. For all the emotion they showed, they might just as well have never heard even the name of Mademoiselle Clari. And, after all, that was not impossible. Had she been Lady Quorne, that would have been a different thing.

Why should she, who had received the applause of millions and the homage of princes, look disappointed, even for a moment, because the announcement of her name had fallen flat on the cobblers and carpenters of a little out-of-the-way village like Laxton? And yet, with all her self-possession, so obvious was the momentary disappointment that Walter Gordon observed it—it is true his eyes were quick, but he was certainly not looking for it, and looks that are seen when not looked for must be very plain indeed; people mostly

see what they expect to see. He even caught the least little motion of her shoulders—the faintest suggestion of a shrug—as she turned her eyes largely upon him once more, and said:

"You see, monsieur, that I am not so known like you say."

"That is precisely what the sun said, mademoiselle, when he once found himself among the moles."

"The moles?"

"Yes—very honest little creatures, but not famous for seeing beyond their day's labour. But because they don't see him, it is not less true that the whole world knows the sun."

"But all the same, the moles are of the world."

"Then they are more than Laxton is, mademoiselle."

"Laxton?"

She had a trick, he noticed, of repeating a word in the form of a question, drawing her brows a little closer together at the same time. He had often noticed that the most eloquent eyes go with slow minds.

"This is Laxton, mademoiselle."

"Oh, the place? I never heard of him."

"Then Laxton is like you, you see—not so well known as it believes. Only there is just all the difference between the mole not being known to the sun, and the sun not being known to the mole."

Walter Gordon was still as bewildered, at least so far as any adventures can bewilder the adventurous, at finding the famous prima donna in the parlour of The Five Adzes; but he did not choose to show his wonder, and was enjoying the yet greater bewilderment of the good people, who must, he judged, be finding themselves so strangely at sea on their own floor. He

knew that he was talking nonsense, and was inventing some new compliment whereabouts to impress the signora, when the foreigner who had been sent to fetch him from the chimney again hustled into the room.

"Mademoiselle," he burst out in French, "this is Despair!"

"Despair?"

"The depth! I have torn my hair—see—but it is no use; none at all. It is a Gig, mademoiselle—and a Deluge!"

"A gig—and a deluge?"

"Yes, mademoiselle—yes, a thousand times."

"What is it you call a gig, Prosper?"

"A gig? It is Despair! It is a thing where you would get wet to the skin. It is Death, mademoiselle. That is a gig—Death; Despair."

"Then what is to be done?"

"Nothing—nothing but to wait; to wait in a place where there is nothing to eat, great Heaven, but bacon, and where it rains for ever."

Walter Gordon observed the Frenchman more closely. He was a large, portly man, who should, by right of age as well as of temperament, have been calm and stolid, and whose tragedy was therefore not unmixed with comedy. He gesticulated little, but there was an intensity and force of passion about him, that made one feel that in every future lexicon the word Gig must henceforth be substituted for Despair. Walter looked for a moment at Mademoiselle Clari to catch from her eyes any sympathy upon the point of humour; but they showed no trace of a smile. Either she was used to Monsieur Prosper, or else the situation was a genuine tragedy.

At last she said, very seriously, and after the fullest reflection:

"I think I should like to drive in a gig, Prosper."

"Great Heaven! Are you quite mad, mademoiselle?"

"Would one get so very wet, Prosper?"

"Oh no, mademoiselle. You would only be drowned."

"And suppose that I like to be drowned?"

"Great Heaven!"

Meanwhile Walter Gordon caught a look of bewilderment on another face—the most utterly complete he had ever seen. The Five Adzes had a landlord, and he was in the doorway. He had responsibilities that prevented his taking

refuge, like his habitual guests, in the passive comfort of a stare. All he could do was to scratch his ear.

Since Walter was a painter as well as observer, he could not have had a better study of three contrasted faces made to hand. There was tragic volubility in Monsieur Prosper's, stolid bewilderment represented by the landlord's, and in Mademoiselle Clari's a calm and reflective self-will, no less exaggerated in its way. She looked as if, having a caprice for being drowned, nothing would move her. And, certainly, a drive in an open gig in such a downpour would not leave her far short of drowning.

"When shall you learn," she asked quietly of Prosper, "to ask me what I choose to do? Suppose the gig pleases me—what then?"

Walter was at that moment making a sketch of the landlord's face on his mental thumbnail, and he caught his eye.

"Can I be of any use?" he asked, including the landlord and Mademoiselle Clari.

"Yes, sir, you might, if e'er a man could understand their lingo. As for I, I can't make head—no, nor tail. What for a man should go out of his seven wits at sight of a trap, beats me—less it's French ways, as it may be, I never saw such folk since I was born."

"Please to have the gig to the door," said Mademoiselle Clari, calmly.

"I'm afraid Monsieur Prosper is right," said Walter. "Your voice must not be drowned, mademoiselle."

"Ah—then the rest of me is of no matter. Very well. Monsieur," she said suddenly to the under-gamekeeper, "go you and bring the gig for me."

The gracious sweetness of look and manner that she threw into her address, the sudden turn from stony obstinacy to the most winning courtesy, were not lost on Walter Gordon, however it might be with the gamekeeper. Had he been a prince whom she wished to bring to her feet, she could do no more. It was the first time he had seen the exercise of intentional fascination—and to be wasted on a Laxton peasant for a trifl! He was growing interested; she was becoming something of a riddle to him, independently of her presence at The Five Adzes.

All the world knew all about Mademoiselle Clari, and Walter Gordon shared in the common knowledge. It is true that

while everybody knew everything about her, nobody knew precisely the same. And Walter Gordon's share in the common knowledge meant the knowledge of a good many stories, less consistent than perfectly authentic—that they all were.

There is generally something mysterious about the advent of a prima donna. There are many people who, in their hearts, believe that the race has no origin, but simply appears. The world used to be content with what it had, and cared not to pierce the bellows to discover whence the wind blew. But we have changed all that. We care less about how a singer sings than whence she gets her diamonds; and less even about that delicate subject than her birthplace and her pedigree. And the result of our enquiries is rather to confirm the view, that a prima donna comes from nowhere.

Clari, for instance, had an Italian name; but, as all the world now knows, an Italian name seldom denotes an Italian. There were people who said she was in point of fact an American—a Miss Clare, from Brooklyn; and this they had on the best authority. That she was French, was a common belief; she was related to Monsieur Prosper, her half-master, half-teacher, half-courier, half-impresario, half-secretary, as niece, daughter, wife, or whatever other relation happened to be on the best authority for the time. And certainly she spoke French, far more fluently than she spoke American. That she had never yet been in the United States was proof positive with some that she was, with others that she was not, a citizen of one of them; that she had constantly sung in France was positive proof with some that she was not, with others that she was, a Frenchwoman. But the best belief, and among the minority of really well-informed people, was that she was born in Madrid, or Seville, or Barcelona, or "one of those places;" at any rate in Spain. Clari was an adaptation of her christian-name—Clara. She certainly had features of the Spanish type, she affected the Spanish costume, and she might be able to talk Spanish, as well as she talked French, Italian, or English, for anything that anybody knew to the contrary. A very little Spanish, as a rule, goes nearly as long a way as a very little Italian. She was undoubtedly a good linguist; good enough to be a Russian, or a cosmopolitan. The only nationality, in short, which was never laid to her, was

the German; and if she was never called Hungarian, it was probably because it never occurs to people to think much of Hungary in such matters.

On the score of her race or native land, she herself was as reticent as becomes a prima donna. A prima donna is, perhaps, unique among women in never talking about her aunts or uncles, or saying, "when I was a girl." And she had that peculiar, but unpatriotic habit, not uncommon among queens of song, of letting the audiences that like "native talent" claim her for a compatriot, and those that like foreign artists count her as a foreigner. In France, she never protested that she was not a Frenchwoman; but in England, she never so much as hinted that she might be an Englishwoman—a British Miss Clare. Such a suspicion would have been mischief; and a paragraph to that effect maliciously inserted in some newspaper gossip was at once suppressed and contradicted.

But, on the whole, and for all practical purposes, whether Miss Clare, or Mademoiselle Prosper, or Senorita Clara, she was an Italian singer—and might, therefore, just possibly have come from Italy after all.

Then—was she married? And if so, how often? And if not, ought she to be? It did not follow that, because the bills called her mademoiselle, she was not madame. The personnel of her calling is a mass and a maze of contradictions; all that seems, is not; all that is not, seems. Singers' husbands are as obscurely mysterious a race as singers' fathers—more so, indeed, unless they are made prominent by special scandal. And, as yet, no scandal had ever brought to light any possible husband of Mademoiselle Clari.

On the contrary, whatever she was, whoever she was, she was one of those happy women, well-nigh miraculously happy for one on her pedestal, from whom scandal rolls off without harm or stain. It was strange; for she had not the air of an artistic puritan. Miss Hayward was not the only person who had been unpleasantly struck by the contrast between her deep brown eyes and her golden glory of hair. Then she was eccentric, beyond all question; and eccentricity, in most cases, is the certain path to an ill-name. There were all sorts of anecdotes current and afloat about her caprices, her restlessness, her avarice, her prodigality, her generosity,

her vindictiveness, her charity ; but about the propriety of her conduct, not one. The most ill-natured could only say of her, that she was cold-natured, and was, therefore, not exposed to the ordinary temptations. And, in truth, with all her undeniable fascination, nobody had ever been able to make love to Mademoiselle Clari. Those who had tried, invariably found her, not only cold, but stupid—at least, they thought so. Nor had anybody ever found her particularly gifted with brains.

As to her age—but that nobody even pretended to know, beyond the certainty that she was not less than twenty, and the probability that she was not over forty.

Such was Mademoiselle Clari, as Walter Gordon knew of her. He had heard her sing, and, to say the truth, she had interested him singularly little. Many people raved of her; but he was not one of her admirers. For his taste, her popularity was a fatal flaw in her. He "schwärmed," as they used to say at Lindenheim in the old student days, for all whom the general voice condemned; in these days he would have thrown in his musical lot with the disciples of the future—until the future came; and then he would have been its enemy. He could no more profess admiration for a popular singer than for a popular composer; he had long ago made up his mind, that majorities are necessarily composed of fools. So it had been at Lindenheim, so it was now, and so it would be always and everywhere; for the devotion to minorities comes of inborn instinct, and can never be conquered by reason. And so he had always been in the habit of turning up his nose at the name of Mademoiselle Clari.

But now, though he had seen her close, and did not admire her the more, and though he had exchanged a few stupidities with her in the way of conversation, and though her behaviour by no means attracted him, still he felt himself within that circle of personal fascination, magnetism, whatever the name of the thing may be, that is more than half the secret of song. He felt sure that she was neither amiable nor wise; but he knew he should never think of her without interest again.

And at the same time, he had to himself been regarding her first as an adventure, and then as a comedy. Her frank disappointment at finding herself unknown in Laxton, the missing one little useless leaf

from her laurel crown, delighted a student of his fellow-creatures. The episode of the gig was beyond him; but, meanwhile, it gave him an opportunity of watching the effect of her fascination on the gamekeeper. Was she trying experiments too?

It was not likely that even an electric spark would fly fast at Laxton. But then speed is comparative.

The effect was as simple as possible. The under-gamekeeper rose, stepped over the form, put on his cap, and went out into the rain. Mademoiselle Clari, as it were, folded up her sweet graciousness again, and put it away for next time. She looked neither at Prosper nor at Walter, but fanned herself abstractedly. Prosper paced up and down the parlour in a fume; but he did nothing to stop the gamekeeper. And, if the latter was really influenced by chivalry, interference would not have been wise, for he was a strapping fellow, and tall of his hands.

But Walter did not feel inclined to submit to airs, simply because he had in effect said no more than that it was a wet evening. So he repeated his offence, purposely, by way of an experiment in his turn.

"You will get very wet, mademoiselle, without shelter or cover."

"I do not like being always the same."

"But you will catch cold."

"Not if I am drowned."

"And will drive? There is only room for two. Have you far to go, mademoiselle?"

"Far to go? Ah, here is the gig. Good-night, Prosper."

"Mademoiselle!"

"I beg your pardon," said the landlord, addressing Walter, "you've had my gig round, and welcome, but I don't know you from my own mother, and if the two of you takes a horse and a gig, who's to bring it home again? That's what puzzles me. You may be going to drive to Lingo, for all I don't know."

"Have you a man to drive? No?"

"Oh, I can drive my own self, if it comes to that. I've had a wetting afore now, and I'll have many a more I trust afore I die, else I shan't live long. But my gig aren't made for three, and we're none of us such little 'uns."

"You will drive your own self? Ah, but I want you to drive Prosper. I shall stay. It is too wet for a dog. Ah, Prosper, my friend, you will be wet indeed," she said to him in French, with a tender

regret. "But then I have a throat, you see, and you have none."

"Great Heaven, mademoiselle! No throat? No, but I have lungs, mademoiselle, and a skin. You say yourself it is not fit for a dog, mademoiselle."

"Are you a dog, my friend? Go; one of us must get wet. Would you like it to be me?"

"Mademoiselle, you speak English. Bid them bring me some paper and some ink and a pen."

"A pen?"

"Yes. I shall compose my epitaph, and make my will."

"And what will you leave me?"

"I shall leave you—to regret, mademoiselle."

"Ah?"

"And for my epitaph, that shall be——"

"I will write your epitaph, Prosper. There—you see I save you all the trouble. Do you hear me, monsieur? When shall you learn to do what I say? Ah, how it rains!"

And certainly there must have been some strong reason for turning out Monsieur Prosper with what was beginning to look like wanton cruelty—some stronger reason still for his making unwilling preparation to obey. The rain was pouring down in floods and torrents, so that even the seasoned labourers of Laxton were delaying the need of going home.

Why had the gamekeeper gone at once for the gig? Why had not the landlord of The Five Adzes objected altogether to the proceeding, and refused to let out his horse and himself to a strange Frenchman for an unexplained journey, on a night when no sane man would wish to be out of doors, even for pay? Why did Prosper, with all a Frenchman's horror of water-drops and his care for his own comfort, submit to what seemed no matter of absolute necessity?

Walter asked himself all these questions, and could find but one answer. It was not fascination, it was not magnetism; it was just Mademoiselle Clari. He began to understand what made her such a queen of song. He was beginning to dislike her practically instead of only in theory; and yet he hoped that she was not going to ask him also to do anything very absurd.

It took Monsieur Prosper a long time to prepare. Facing the rain seemed to require as much anxious arming as if he were going out to battle. At last, when he was complete, he must have struck the

people of Laxton with awe, for he stood before them thrice his former size, in a huge Russian cloak of fur that covered his head and hat with a hood, fell over his finger-tips, and reached down to his heels. It was to be hoped that the gig from The Five Adzes was tolerably roomy, or it would be worse for the driver.

Presently the gig went splashing off. Clari kept her seat at the deal table, fanning herself, and drinking sugar and water. She did not seem in the least disposed to move, and her presence appeared to keep anybody else from moving. And yet Walter felt that all remained there by her will, and that if she had willed them all to go, they would have gone.

What was her next caprice to be?

"This is new to me," she said presently to Walter, who was sitting just outside the chimney-corner. "What do you do when I am not here? I want to see. What do you do?" she asked, turning suddenly to the gamekeeper.

"Well, miss, I don't know as we do so much. We just sits a bit, and takes our beer——"

"And sing too," said Walter.

"You sing? Ah, that is what I want to hear. We will do what you always do. You shall have your beer, and you shall sing. I can drink out of pewter too. Ah! this is good—and hark to the rain! Sing—you!" she said to the gamekeeper.

He looked round at his friends a little feebly, coloured, and smiled bashfully. Clari watched him gravely over the edge of her fan, which hid all her face below the eyes.

Walter felt a greater dislike to her than ever. Was she so bent on conquest that she could not let a peasant alone, but must needs flirt with a servant if his master were not by? As for Walter himself, she seemed to ignore him—whether that increased or lessened his growing dislike I know not. Nevertheless, he remained. She had not willed that he should go.

It must have been a bad moment for the gamekeeper. He found courage neither in his own heart, nor in the faces of his friends.

"Very well," said Clari; "I wanted to hear, that's all."

All—and enough.

"Great Job, the god o' thunder,  
And March, the god o' war——"

But, when the end of the first of the interminable verses was reached, Clari rose and

swept out of the room with a proud smile, half of which at least she gave to Walter. It seemed to say :

" You see I can conquer little worlds as well as large ! "

### PLAYING FOR LOVE.

A STORY.

THEY tell me that nowadays, when a vessel arrives at Melbourne, the pilot comes off to her outside the harbour. If so, I congratulate the adult colony of Victoria upon, at all events, one very decided improvement upon the somewhat eccentric arrangements adopted by the juvenile colony of Port Phillip some time ago. When I arrived there in the year 1851, in the good ship *Anonymous*, the fashion was for the pilot to wait till the danger was passed, and then come quietly on board inside the bar, and entertain you, on the way up to the mouth of the Yarra Yarra, with playful chaff upon the narrowness of your escape from laying your bones upon it. In case there should be any among my readers who may not yet have made a "personally-conducted" to Australia, and may thus miss the cream of this exquisite practical jest, I may mention that the harbour of Victoria is a little inland sea of I forget how many hundred square miles in extent, with just one exceedingly narrow entrance. It is in fact something like a very huge bottle with a very tiny neck ; or, to be more dignified, like a miniature Mediterranean with a proportionate Gut of Gibraltar.

Now this is all very well with the Mediterranean, which is an easy-going classical old sea, ready enough to rage upon adequate occasions, but far too blasé for the unexciting exertion of a daily tide. But Port Phillip is in its juvenile stage—that stage when it is a physical necessity to be "doing something," if it be only the truly diabolical occupation of going to and fro and walking up and down. So Port Phillip, of course, indulges in a tide, and as this tide has no other means of getting in and out of the big bottle except through the little neck, you may readily obtain, by the simple means of filling a bottle with water and turning it topsy-turvy, a fairly suggestive idea of the way in which it conducts itself on the passage. To make things better, about half the channel is barred by a submerged reef.

I will do the third mate of the *Anonymous* the justice to believe that he was

not aware of the ingenious regulation above referred to, by which it was ordained that a vessel should in all cases run the gauntlet of this pleasant passage, before presuming to demand the services of a pilot. Indeed there was no particular reason why the third mate should have known anything about it. It was only his second voyage at sea, and the first had been to Callao and back. You will say perhaps that, under those circumstances, there was no particular reason why the charge of the good ship *Anonymous* should have been left to the third mate. And perhaps there was not. Only with the second mate deserted in Port Cooper, the mate with his skull split fairly open twelve hours ago by the fall of a heavy block, and the skipper what a figuratively-disposed Yankee on board called "sopping drunk" in his cabin, it was not so easy to say on whom else that duty should devolve. And on the whole, perhaps, as a practical seaman without the slightest knowledge of his whereabouts except such as might be gleaned from a chart carefully locked up in some unknown drawer in the captain's cabin, he no doubt acted for the best in not attempting to run his ship's nose into such a very uninviting-looking trap as Port Phillip Heads without assistance, and accordingly in heaving her to and signalling vehemently for assistance.

He was wrong, no doubt, in swearing so freely as he did, when, instead of sending us a pilot, the lighthouse people replied by signalling in their turn with equal emphasis, but, to us, in a perfectly unknown tongue, to the effect that until we should have got over our difficulties no assistance could be given. But I am bound to admit, both that the circumstances offered some temptation to such a course, and that a large majority both of crew and passengers joined very heartily in the performance. Meanwhile the good ship *Anonymous* drifted slowly, but very surely, towards her doom. There was a strongish breeze blowing straight into the harbour, and as luck would have it, a strongish tide still setting straight out of it. As we neared the bar we felt the influence of the latter more strongly, and hung, like Mahomet's coffin, between wind and tide. Only that with Mahomet's coffin, wind and tide, or what answers to them, appear to be fixed quantities, whereas in our case the tide, as we afterwards discovered, would slacken and turn in about another hour, and then—

At length, just as the "then" was getting painfully imminent, a small boat was seen struggling towards us. Fortunately the wind had comparatively but little effect on her low hull, while the full force of the tide swept her towards us, or the one man who rowed and the one boy who steered her would have had but a slender chance. As it was she just lived to get alongside three parts full of water, and sank from under their feet, as they scrambled out of her into our mizen-chains.

"What the——" began our irate young acting-commander, more savage at the delay than grateful for the help that had come at last. But the man cut him short.

"Is she quick in stays?" he asked briskly and imperatively, altogether disregarding not only the mate's angry greeting but the chorus of objurgation from the forty or fifty passengers around.

"No," he replied sullenly, "d——d slow."

The man struck his hand impatiently upon his thigh, and a look came into his face, before which the chorus of objurgation somehow died away suddenly into silence. The stranger gave one quick glance aloft, another to leeward, where the boiling surge seemed to thunder over the reef almost close under our beam, then spoke again briskly and imperatively as before.

"Then fill and wear round," he said. "There's no help for it. And bear a hand every soul of you, for it's touch and go."

And touch and go it was. The men worked as I never saw them work before, and have but rarely seen others work since. Every passenger, too, lent a hand at some easily recognised brace or sheet. The main-yards swung round. The ship gathered way, paid off, rushed for a few seconds headforemost towards the reef, came slowly up on the other tack, and then jammed hard upon the wind, with every stitch set under which she could stagger, laboured, with straining rigging and bending masts, to fight her way back to the entrance, past which she had drifted in her ignorance half an hour ago.

For ten minutes or so, the excitement of that race for life was as intense as any of which I have as yet had experience. They say we touched the corner of the reef, and the two men at the wheel were certain that they felt the rudder bump as she swept by. I know the spray from the breakers fell in clouds upon the deck, when, just as the two topgallant-masts

went with a crash over the side under the pressure of a stronger puff than usual, the face of the stranger expanded into a smile, and opening his close-shut lips, he sang out briskly once more:

"Up helm! Round in your weather-braces. Square away, Mr. What's-your-name, and never mind the wreck."

And so the danger was passed, and with a ringing cheer we dashed gaily into the smooth water of the inner bay.

The breeze still held, and in very few more hours we were up at the anchorage. Half an hour more, and the anchor was down; the sails, what were left of them, had been furled and stowed somehow, and the ship's boats hoisted out, without much need of or regard for the orders of the unlucky young third mate, who, it must be confessed, took very good-humouredly the plentiful chaff which rewarded his well-meant but perfectly futile attempts at enforcing something like discipline. Equally futile were the remonstrances of the passengers, who soon discovered that the ship's boats would only accommodate the ship's crew, and that, on this occasion, at all events, they were not by any means intended to accommodate anyone else. And as the passengers were a little more numerous than the mate, it seemed at first as though there were likely to be "a row."

Our friendly pilot, however—he was not a pilot at all, by-the-way, but the master of a small coasting schooner, doing a fine trade in these golden days between Melbourne and Twofold Bay—pointed out to us that, even if we conquered our point, only one batch of us could be landed in the boats, and that only on Liardet's Beach, whilst if we waited quietly for the steamer which was sure to be alongside soon, a sovereign or so apiece would take us all right up to the town. So we gave the crew a parting benediction, received an equally hearty compliment in return, and awaited the steamer with what philosophy we might. In another hour she was alongside, and we too departed, leaving the captain in peaceful possession of his ship, through which his snoring now resounded in uninterrupted melody. By-and-by, no doubt, he also awoke; realised—perhaps, with a little difficulty—the condition of affairs, and hailing the steamer in his turn, was, "as in duty bound, the last to leave his ship." I can't speak from personal knowledge, and he may have jumped, or tumbled, overboard. All I know is, that when, at the cost of a ten-pound note, we

got a boat next day to go off from Liardet's Beach for our effects, we found the dead chief mate "in sole charge."

You may suppose that the interval between our passage of the famous bar, and the little discussion that followed touching the movements of the crew, had not passed without some attempt on our part to signify our gratitude to our rescuers. Two meetings had been held, one in the cuddy, one in the steerage, and a nice little purse of some fifty sovereigns had been made up and duly handed to the elder of the two, with a complimentary speech on the quarter-deck. For himself, however, he had declined it.

"Thank you kindly, gentlemen," he said, "all the same. I'm making money pretty fast, and shall get a good price for this job out of the agents. So, if you'll allow me, I'll just hand it over to the lad. I couldn't have got off without him."

The boy coloured crimson through the tan which browned his honest open face, and his blue eyes sparkled with delight.

"Thanking you kindly, gentlemen, I'm sure;" and he took off his cap and ruffled up his crisp brown curls in a desperate attempt at stimulating adequate utterance. "I'm—I'm heartily obliged, gentlemen—and—and to you too, sir, I'm sure—and—and—I ain't noways good at talking, gentlemen—but—I do thank you—hearty."

And as the young fellow turned away, it rather seemed to me as though he dashed a brown hand across the bright blue eyes a little suspiciously.

"What shall you do with it all, my lad?" I asked presently, as we were leaning side by side over the taffrail waiting for the steamer.

The boy coloured again, and the honest blue eyes lighted up.

"Send it to my sister, sir," he answered. "The old man's in trouble just now with losses, and one thing and another, and I've saved up five-and-twenty pound already. There's a mail goes out to-morrow, and—there she is, sir—there comes the steamer. I wonder if there'll be a letter in town from Sis."

By nightfall I was lodged, not very sumptuously as regards accommodation, but royally enough in respect of cost, at The Prince of Wales, and young Harry Godwin had left me to go up to the post-office in search of a possible letter, promising to look me up the next day before going on board again, and tell me all the

news. For Master Harry had interested me, and I really wanted to know how "the old man" was getting on, and whether the prospect was in any way brightening of that future union between pretty Sis, working hard to keep a roof over his head in the little Kentish village seventeen thousand miles away, and honest Dick Golding, toiling away night and day up to his waist in water at Welcher's River, forty miles beyond Ballarat.

Meanwhile, a less romantic, but more practical and pressing consideration, was—dinner; and that discussed, I strolled out for a moonlight look at Canvas Town. I have a curious faculty, not merely for finding my way generally, but for finding it, in the case of any new or unexplored locality, straight to what will be for me the most interesting spot in it. In the present instance, my accommodating instinct conducted me direct to the establishment of Mr. Hermann Rauch.

From an architectural point of view, Mr. Hermann Rauch's establishment could hardly, perhaps, be considered a success. The building, which was about fifty feet long by twenty wide, stood endwise to the street, if street it could be called, which street was none, but only an irregular chasm, of varying width and uncertain direction, between two rows of tents and shanties. Its original design had evidently been that of a frame-house, with planked walls, glazed windows, and asphalted roof. And, so far as concerned a considerable portion of the principal front, this design had been carried into execution. The door stood, of course, in the centre, with a window, or a place for one, on either side. Of these windows, the one on the side nearest the town was complete—all but the glass—the wall through which it was pierced being also fairly finished in stout deal planks, all but a space of some four feet square in the top corner, which I at first took to be occupied by a sign, but found, on examination, to be filled in, for lack of boards, with some half-dozen gaily-painted teatrays. On the other side of the door the planking ceased a little more than half-way up the window; the remaining portion of the façade being eked out with a huge tarpauling. To a fanciful mind—a little, perhaps, under the influence of its surroundings—the house had a look of having been fighting, and of having come off with a gigantic black eye.

However, the framework of that per-

tion of the building was perfect enough, and for at least a couple of yards back the roof also possessed a fair semblance of the original design, and was duly covered with asphalted felt, neatly nailed down. Then, suddenly, the felt also gave place to tarpauling; which again, in its turn, was replaced by a heterogeneous collection of old sails, reef-points, bolt-ropes, and all, just as they had been cut away from the yards—and with every here and there an irregular opening, hastily slit with a knife, to let out the smoke and foul air. Apparently, even this material had run rather short after a time, for the roof, which at the street-end must have been quite eighteen feet in height, made a sudden dip about twenty feet back, and from thence continued its downward course till, at the far end, the ridge-pole was within easy reach of my umbrella. Mr. Rauch, who was a philosopher, thought this a decided artistic advantage. It helped the "bersh-bectiff," he said, and made the building look longer.

It was the sound of music which first attracted me to the place; and, on entering, I found a flute, a harp, and a cornet-à-piston in full blast. I don't think they were all playing quite the same tune; indeed, the cornet, who of course had it all his own way, and who had evidently absorbed quite as many "nobblers" as were good for him, was himself a little uncertain as to both air and key, and, even as I entered, glided from one tune into another, with a rapidity which must a little have disconcerted his accompanists. That, however, was a minor matter. Outside the building the more penetrating tones of the instruments had made themselves heard sharply enough. Within the babel of sounds, the clamour of a hundred voices, the click of tin pannikins and pewter-pots, the shouts for beer and brandy and "sham," the rattle of dice, the banging of rough deal tables with heavy fists, and the stamping of huge hob-nailed boots on the loosely-boarded floor, made up among them a volume of noise which, for the most part, fairly dominated the musical portion of the entertainment, and left the performers free to follow their own sweet will in the matter either of time or tune.

Round this pandemonium I had been "loafing" quietly for half an hour or so, taking an occasional nobbler for the benefit of the house, and losing or winning a half-crown or so here and there, just to

avoid singularity, when my attention was arrested by a sight which, at the moment, it grieved me not a little to see.

I am not strait-laced in the matter of gambling, which, I frankly confess, has always appeared to me at least as innocent a means of losing—or, for the matter of that, of gaining—money as a good many others on which the Mrs. Grundy of the period looks with anything but disfavour. But I was sorry to see young Harry Godwin here.

There was something in the boy's face, too, which only too quickly assured me that he was not at Mr. Hermann Rauch's establishment in any character of mere visitor like myself. It was an honest open face enough still; but it had lost the merry, careless look which I had never yet seen absent from it, even when the labouring ship was closest on the breakers, and any moment might find us struggling for our lives in a whirlpool that would drown a whale. Now, it had a heavy, anxious, and, at the same time, eager look—the look I have seen so often since, and had even then seen more than once, as the face of some young beginner at the deadly table.

This, then, was the end of all his good resolutions of the evening; this was to be the fate of the money which he had earned so gallantly, and which was to have been sent off by to-morrow's mail, to help the struggling father and good, hard-working sister at home. It was no business of mine, of course, and in such an atmosphere as that of a gold colony who could expect a lad like that to steer clear of all the thousand temptations around him, and with his pockets full of money too? If he were not here, he would very likely be doing worse. And yet I couldn't help being sorry for it—so sorry that I was on the point of making my way to his side, and trying if I could not rescue poor pretty Sis's fifty pounds for that night, at all events, when the opportunity passed. The boy, who had been hurrying about from table to table, looking now at monté, now at euchre, now at cribbage, but not venturing to try his luck at games of which, as I afterwards found, he knew absolutely nothing, had at length arrived at one where the play was confined to simple betting upon the dice, and from which a man was just rising with a goodly spoil. The boy hesitated a moment, then set his teeth close, and sat down on the vacant cask. Before I could make my way to the table he had already won twice,

and the blue eyes were beginning to sparkle. Then I knew that I was too late, and that the fever-fit must run its course.

Poor Harry! It did not take long. For about half an hour he held out, now winning a trifle, now losing a trifle more. Gradually the little pile of sovereigns diminished in bulk, then vanished altogether, and Harry Godwin's last stake lay on the beer-stained table. The great shag-bearded digger with whom he was playing gave a huge horse-laugh, and rattled the dice-box triumphantly over his head.

"Last chuck, mate?" he roared pleasantly. "Ha! ha! here goes. Sixes again, by the living Jingo! Cleaned out, my lad, eh? Ha! ha! ha!" And the jovial winner swept poor Harry's last sovereign into his well-filled leatheren purse, and shouted aloud, like an amiable Goliah, for a new antagonist.

The boy sat quite quiet for a moment or two, looking with vacant eyes at the place where his money had lain, then, without a word, he flung his arms upon the table, dropped his head upon them, and burst into a passion of tears.

"Hallo, mate!" roared the merry giant opposite, half-amused, half-disgusted, at this very unorthodox procedure; "that last shot started a water-butt, eh?"

There was a laugh among the bystanders, and a dozen or two of disengaged players came crowding round, with a plentiful supply of jeering chaff for the poor-spirited creature, who couldn't lose his money without crying over it like a great child.

"Here, come out of this, you howling young whelp," cried one, seizing him roughly by the neck, "and make room for a man. We don't want any blubbering gals here."

But the rough grasp on Harry Godwin's collar did him good, and aroused his spirit again. Shaking off his assailant's hand he sprang from his seat, and faced round with clenched fist and sparkling eye.

"Don't lay your hand on me, mate," he said briskly enough; "I am a fool, I know, but I ain't no coward, and—— Oh! sir," he broke off suddenly as he caught sight of me, "only see here."

I took the letter he held out to me, and ran my eye rapidly through it. It was short enough and clear enough—only too clear. The last sentence will be sufficient.

"So it is no use, Harry," it ran. "Unless the two hundred pounds can be got at somehow before Christmas, and that I

know can't be, I must marry Mr. Pickering or father must go to prison. Tell Dick Golding—poor darling Dick—" and then there was a great blot, and the letter ended abruptly without even a signature. But there was no need for any signature, or for any explanation now of Harry Godwin's presence in that room. It was already September. The mail—the only mail that could possibly reach England by Christmas—sailed the next morning, or rather that morning, for day was already beginning to dawn. Dick Golding—"poor darling Dick"—was many a mile away. If fortune would but smile, the seventy-five pounds the boy already had in hand might even now be turned into the two hundred pounds, which alone could save Dick's sweetheart, his own pretty Sis, from the fate that hung over her. That was the story of Harry Godwin's visit to Mr. Hermann Rauch's Spielsaal in Canvas Town.

"Don't bother the lad," I said, and I felt something very like a tingling in my own eyelids, and following the impulse of the moment I held out the letter to Harry's late antagonist. He took it, looked at me, then at him, then slapped his great hand upon the table, and sprang to his feet.

"Harry Godwin!" he shouted. "Why, if I didn't think I knew the face! Are you Harry Godwin of Twofold Bay?"

The lump in poor Harry's throat was still too big to let him speak, but he nodded assent, and dashed the tears angrily away with his hand. The next moment the big digger was standing on the table, which creaked and groaned under his weight.

"Hallo there! mates," he roared at the top power of his stentorian lungs. "Hallo, there! Winners ahoy!"

There was a lull in the clamour which filled the room, and all turned towards the speaker, who pulled his battered billycock from his head, and held it out at arm's length.

"Look here, lads," he cried; "you've all heard of Harry Godwin, the boy as jumped in right among the sharks to save Bill Curling's little wench."

A murmur of assent ran round the room.

"Aye, aye," said one hoarse voice, answering for the rest, "we've heerd. What about he?"

"Why he's down in his luck, that's what he is. His fancy gal"—the speaker was making a slight confusion of persons

here, but it didn't signify—"his fancy gal's got to marry another one, if so be as he can't shell out two hundred pounds by this thundering mail, and darn me if I aren't been and rooked him out of every blessed shiner."

"More shame for you," growled the hoarse voice again in reply; "give the chap his quids back again, and be hanged to ye."

"Give 'em back!" roared the first speaker, as he dashed a huge handful of coin into the hat which he still held out oratorically. "In course I will. Here they be, and a dozen more to the back of 'em. But that aren't enough, boys, nor half enough. So now then, winners ahoy! Who'll shell out a handful of shinners to save plucky Hal Godwin's sweetheart?"

I must confess that, as a rule, I should not expect an appeal of this sort to meet with much success in a gambling-room. But your Australian or Californian digger "on the spree" is a very different animal from the businesslike habitué of Homburg or Monaco. He plays not so much for the gain as for the excitement of the game, and his great empty heart is often but the softer for the little call that his surroundings allow of being made upon it. The battered billycock made its round, and made it by no means in vain. Within ten minutes it was back again, and its contents poured out in a shining heap upon the table. There was enough in it to free pretty Sis and leave Harry a ten-pound note over into the bargain.

I must have been in a terribly didactic mood that morning, for as we hurried off to the post-office to despatch the precious remittance, I could not for the life of me help expressing a hope that the present success would not lead Harry into frequenting Mr. Rauch's establishment.

"Never again, sir," he answered with earnestness. "And, after all, sir," he added, looking up in my face with his broadest and merriest smile, "after all, you know, sir, I was only 'playing for love.'"

#### BY THE RIVERSIDE.

##### CANVAS AND KETTLE.

THE work of destruction and decay among the old waterside inns continues, oddly enough, down the left bank of the river, leaving the right shore comparatively untouched. Of the army of amphibious taverns which once gave the

name of Blackwall a festive ring, but two remain in their pristine shape—The Torington Arms, with its garden reaching down to the river, and The Artichoke—once the goal of many joyous folk bent on the consumption of whitebait. Alack! things have changed, since the writer tasted his first whitebait at The Artichoke. I mind me that in those days rum-punch, properly iced, was invariably drunk with turtle and with whitebait. They never give me any now. My noble and wealthy friends, when they invite me to a riverside banquet, give me madeira and dry champagne galore, and say they are better for me than rum-punch. Perhaps they are, and very likely bacon and beans taken as a sort of Corinthian capital to a gastronomic column built up of turtle, sootje, salmon, turbot, trout, eels, whitebait in three forms, lamb cutlets, and ducks and peas, may be easier of digestion and more agreeable to the palate than venison; but I am not quite certain that the ancient meals, composed of sootje of flounders, whitebait plain, devilled black and devilled red, followed by a neck of venison, and moistened with rum-punch and port-wine or burgundy, were not better suited to persons endowed with simple tastes, and digestive organs of only moderate calibre. But fashion changes sides on the river as elsewhere, and the tide now sets towards Greenwich. The most famous of all the Blackwall houses for fish dinners has not, even like The Artichoke, preserved its identity. It has become translated from Lovegrove's into part railway station and part emigrant office.

On the Greenwich side there are many famous taverns—The Ship, The Crown and Sceptre, and The Trafalgar—all famous for whitebait. Into the long controversy concerning the true nature of whitebait it would hardly become me to enter. I have listened at The Trafalgar, and eke at Skindle's by Maidenhead-bridge, to long and desperate arguments concerning the right of the *Clupea Alba* to rank as a species. I have heard sceptics declare that it is merely the fry of various fish, notably the herring, while those jealous of its individuality retorted that no herrings come within miles of the whitebait fisheries of the Thames. It was not, I thought, my province to settle this stern question. I was content to eat my whitebait, sip my wine, and reflect that the great Harry—eighth of that name—loved Greenwich as a residence, mainly on account of the white-

bait caught hard by, and that the Worshipful Company of Stationers had found out the virtues of whitebait as early as 1612. At the great funeral feast given in that year in honour of the founder of the Charterhouse, the bill of fare included "six dishes of whitebait." It would seem, however, that at a later date the tiny fishes came down in the world, for Pennant, writing in the eighteenth century, records that during the season there was a vast resort to Greenwich and Blackwall taverns of the "lower order of epicures." From this temporary abasement whitebait was raised by the ministerial dinner which, suspended under Mr. Gladstone's Government, was restored by Lord Beaconsfield, and was only omitted this month on account of the death of Mr. Ward Hunt. The origin of the annual Cabinet festivity is said to have been in the hospitality of a merchant named Preston, a Nova Scotia baronet and sometime member of parliament for Dover. This gentleman had a "fishing cottage" on the banks of Dagenham-reach, and in the spring-time often went thither with a friend or two, to enjoy a rest from parliamentary and other business. His most frequent guest was George Rose, the Secretary of the Treasury, and an Elder Brother of Trinity House. One day, as Mr. Rose and Sir Robert Preston were sipping their wine, or rather drinking it, for they did not sip in those days, the Secretary of the Treasury intimated to his host that Mr. Pitt might perhaps be prevailed upon to come to Dagenham, and would be certain to enjoy himself immensely. A day was named, the Premier was invited, and so delighted was he with the place and the company—they were all "three-bottle men"—that on taking leave he accepted an invitation for the following year.

For several years the "Heaven-sent Minister" and Mr. Rose continued to visit Dagenham, but in those days the world had not yet been shrunk by steam, and the distance was inconvenient. Sir Robert Preston proposed that they should dine at Greenwich, as being nearer London, and the party was increased to four—Mr. Pitt being permitted to bring Lord Camden. Then came Mr. Charles Long—afterwards Lord Farnborough—and one by one other notable Tories were invited, till, at last, Lord Camden considerably remarked that as they were all dining at a tavern, it was but fair that Sir Robert Preston should be relieved of the expense. After a warm

protest it was arranged that the dinner should be given, as usual, by Sir Robert Preston, that is to say, at his invitation; and he insisted on still contributing a buck and the champagne. The rest of the charges were defrayed by the guests, and on this plan the meeting continued to take place annually, till the death of Mr. Pitt.

The next year Sir Robert was requested to summon the guests to the Greenwich banquet—the list included by this time most of the Cabinet ministers. The feast, which generally took place on Trinity Monday, assumed a political or semi-political character before the death of Sir Robert Preston. When that hospitable baronet, full of years and port-wine, departed this life, Lord Farnborough summoned the guests. Up to that time, the invitations had been sent privately, but they were thenceforward despatched in Cabinet boxes, and the dinner became a strictly ministerial celebration. Rivalled for a while by Blackwall, Greenwich has again asserted her superiority; but it must be confessed that beyond Blackwall the blight of the left riverside has not extended. There is at Purfleet a snug establishment, where fish, flesh, and fowl may be found in perfection, and good wine enjoyed over much pleasant yachting talk, imported from Erith and Gravesend and the domains of the Royal Thames Yacht Club generally. In these lower reaches of the river, waterside taverns put on an hotel air, aim at securing yachting customers, and perhaps at developing, in time, into full-blown yacht clubs. They are haunted by yachtsmen—a race by themselves—of whom I would fain discourse, as I watch the white-winged craft skimming over the crisp wavelets of Long Reach. There is much to be said of our yachting friends, for—

As in the land there is no beast,  
But in the sea's by a fish express,

so are there yachtsmen and yachtsmen, as there are yachts and yachts, from the perky ten-ton cutter to the slashing yawl and elegant schooner; from the puffing, snorting steam-launch—the emblem of useful, obtrusive mediocrity—to the full-blown steamship, taut and trim, and competent to go from China to Peru, and farther yet.

Like the hunting-man, the yachting-man puts on many shapes.

First comes the Noble Yachtsman, who is often less identified with yachting than with

other pursuits. To men of this calibre a yacht is part of a great establishment, as is a string of horses at Newmarket, a drag and a showy team, a hunting-box at Melton, a shooting-box in the Highlands, a river in Norway, and a house in Grosvenor-square. This type of yachtsman, as a rule, cares but little for racing. He is a judge of a boat and her points, and is no more the slave of his sailing-master than of his trainer, having technical knowledge and a will of his own. His yacht is as good as can be bought for money, is furnished luxuriously, and manned by a smart and well-paid crew. He loves to extend hospitality to his friends afloat as ashore, being of the opinion that a yacht, like a drag, is a very Dead Sea apple unless enlivened with joyous company. There is less affectation of correctness of costume in the noble yachtsman than in other varieties of the genus. He is not curious as to colour and cut and buttons. When the weather is bad he dons the useful sou'-wester, not dreaming that he can possibly look like a coalheaver.

Of another complexion altogether is the man of birth but of very moderate means, who may be styled the Clever Yachtsman. His analogue may be found in the shires in the hunting season with a neat stud of hunters, ridden well, and ridden to sell. These noble animals—not always the "bonâ fide property" of the skilful cross-country rider—are yet, in his hands, apt to perform feats, which they decline to repeat for the purchaser. The clever yachtsman is perpetually having new yachts built for him, and very good yachts he insists on having from the builder whom he patronises with his custom. He is hospitable and amiable, and is blessed with a family who fill his yacht with an atmosphere of refinement. No more pleasant or amusing gentleman exists than he. Quick at a jest himself, and appreciative of fun in others, he combines English heartiness with that agreeable quality called "*prévenance*" by the French. There is no English word for this quality, and it is so rare that it is perhaps unnecessary to extend our vocabulary. To the clever yachtsman is irresistibly drawn the young plutocrat—often a good fellow enough, and not the golden-freighted beast that imaginative writers love to paint. Plutus junior is charmed with the well-bred air and caressing manners of his host, and, wanting a yacht himself, is impelled to ask if any consideration would

induce the owner to part with the "thing of life" which has just "walked the waters" to some tune, having carried off a hundred guinea prize. The clever yachtsman is prevailed upon, after a slight struggle, to part with the "best boat he ever had," and forthwith orders another to carry his fortunes next season. Plutus junior imagines that he, the happy possessor of the Fly-by-night, will also carry off cups in due season; but his wishes are doomed to disappointment. To begin with, he has difficulties with his sailing-master, who raises a thousand objections to every stick in the new craft. At the suggestion of this important functionary various improvements are made, with the result of depriving young Plutus of all chance of the cups which swam in his mind's eye, when he drew that particularly stiff cheque to the order of the clever yachtsman.

There is a variety of the clever yachtsman who may be designated for the sake of convenience the Building Yachtsman. He is wild for winning prizes, but distrusts the power of a merely good boat to carry them off. He likes to have what turfites call "a bit in hand," and to acquire this advantage expends an amount of ingenuity, which would earn a handsome income if devoted to any other human pursuit. He is generally a Scotchman, who has in some way been connected with shipbuilding, and applies his knowledge to the measurement rules of yacht clubs. Like the man who meditates a great coup at Newmarket, he shapes his whole existence to the attainment of his end. By night and day he dreams of measurement rules, and the possible means of circumventing them. Can he, by shifting perpendiculars, building outlandish sterns, and producing strange uncanny craft, hope to hoodwink measuring secretaries and sailing committees? When at last he has hit upon a notion, which promises to go clean through all known systems of tonnage measurement like the proverbial coach-and-four through an Act of Parliament, he hies him to a builder, established in a remote spot, where the designs for the queer craft can be worked out free from observation or comment. At last the queer craft is entered for a number of races, and is variously measured by various authorities. The hopes of the proprietor are hardly realised. Having so built his ship that she should slip in among the forty-ton boats, he is a little dashed to find her variously assessed at

eighty, a hundred, and a hundred and twenty tons. With a large tonnage allowance the Ameliar-anna may manage to win two or three races, but sailing committees are soon "down upon her," as the late Admiral Rous was upon a horse "running a bye," and measure her out of every race she starts for. Then the building yachtsman retires to a further consideration of measurement rules, sections and models, and after long hatching produces from some creek on the Essex coast another yachting conundrum.

More legitimate in his aims and very amusing in his ways is the Domestic Yachtsman—a fine specimen of economical John Bull. By naturalists oppressed with a mania for sweeping classification, the domestic yachtsman is held to be one variety of that widely-spread genus known in England as the "molly-coddle," in America as the "hen-hussey," a male creature who understands housekeeping, pays his servants' wages himself, keeps a cellar-book with his own hand, and performs other household functions delegated to their womankind by males of a higher organisation. It must not be imagined that even the land variety of the creature is effeminate except in the art of driving a hard bargain, for he is masculine and vigorous enough in keeping his victims to it when made. The marine species possesses similar administrative powers, and is in fact the same creature under other conditions, the difference being merely that of a land-rat and a water-rat. When the domestic yachtsman is ashore, in winter quarters, he is generally domiciled in a large well-found house in a semi-fashionable quarter of London—in fact in one of those dwellings the owners of which can let them for a short London season, for sufficient cash down to pay rent, taxes, and servants' wages for the entire year. In houses of this kind I have generally remarked a plethora of men-servants, whose appearance suggests the yacht's crew projected for the nonce into livery. At the approach of summer the domestic yachtsman surrenders his house to some well-acred country squire, and takes to the water with his entire brood. His yacht, which merely serves him as a locomotive house, is the one thing which gives him importance. He lives in it all the summer and brags about it all the winter. He pays off costly hospitalities by inviting people on board his yacht, and hugely enjoys the status that by no means light-

heeled vessel confers upon him. She might aptly enough be named the Tortoise or the Turtle, for she is a genuine tub-yacht, buoyant enough to knock about in all but the worst weather and when in port, where she spends more than two-thirds of her time, attracts immense consideration to her owner. There are places—enough and to spare—on the coast where a yacht bearing a family of presentable daughters is always welcome. A yacht "looks like money," and the owner is hardly expected to make any return for the hospitality offered to him and his, and they thus have a "good time" at little cost to the head of the family. It should be recollect that the power of going to and fro on the waters may be made to pay in various ways. The domestic yachtsman may run over to France to take on board his light French wine and tolerable brandy, and may drop in at the Channel Islands to buy poultry and eggs. He is also a fisherman where there is anything to be caught, and a dead shot at any edible kind of bird. Economy above everything is the aim of the domestic yachtsman, but occasionally his thoughts take a wider range—as, for instance, when Angelina Maud or Etheldreda Agnes captivates a local magnate. Then the domestic yachtsman shows that in the matter of settlements he is a very sea-lawyer.

Another class of yachtsman is the genuine Pot-hunter, who loves yachting dearly, but loves winning prizes too. His stock-in-trade must be of the best. His boat must be good of her class, her rig as near perfect as possible, and his crew smart to a man. He may be fairly compared to the racing-man who owns a stud of fair horses—of plating, or a little above plating form—and employs his time and ingenuity in "placing" these animals to the best advantage. The yachting pot-hunter arranges his programme on a very different scheme to that of the domestic yachtsman. Although not unmindful of the social dignity conferred by the possession of a yacht, he cares a great deal more for the hundreds, fifties, and twenties, to be picked up during a season afloat. There are so many regattas at the various yachting rendezvous round the coast, and so many prizes in cash, that by carefully arranging his voyage, he can contrive to lighten his expenses very materially. He must, however, be an enthusiast—a genuine yachtsman, with a keen love of the excitement of

racing. It is impossible to deny the claims of the pot-hunter to the rank of a genuine yachtsman, for he knows every good point of his boat, and in case of his sailing-master being ill or out of humour, can sail his boat admirably himself. It is true that he likes the money, but he has, as well, a keen appreciation of the glory of winning.

There is yet another species of yachtsman who cares for glory alone, not purely the glory of seamanship, but the renown conferred by newspapers. To this class belong the member for Brighton and the proprietor of the New York Herald. When yachtsmen of this type contemplate a race across the Atlantic, it is sure to be profusely advertised. The conditions of the match are debated at length, and public expectation is worked up to a high pitch before the great international, or ocean, or inter-polar race can be arranged. At last it is settled, and by this time, gods, men, and the columns of newspapers are fully occupied with the great event. When it comes off, it is invested with all the interest of a decisive battle ; that is to say, if the world happens at the time to be otherwise at peace. Intent on fame of a slightly different kind is the yachtsman who owns a big steam-yacht, and takes her to the Arctic regions or round the world, with the object of writing a book. It requires a keen love of the sea, and of notoriety, to venture over long distances in all weathers with a four or five hundred ton steamer. Probably the voyage is safe enough in a perfectly-found and perfectly-manned vessel ; but those who have only crossed the ocean in a two or three thousand ton steamship can have little idea of the treatment a small vessel experiences in the heavy swell of the Atlantic, and among the ice-fields of the polar seas. It would not, therefore, be fair to deny these ambitious steam yachtsmen their meed of praise, although it might be wished that a tendency to exaggerate their most trivial deeds were not too apparent in the inevitable book, for the sake of which they are done. It is not wonderful that, viewed from the deck of a yacht, storms are more violent, mountains higher, and escapes narrower than from a larger standpoint, and merciful consideration should be extended to the minuteness of the log, which is the first cause of the voyage, nor should the landlubber sneer at the small results of the patient dredging and collecting, undertaken for the sake of investing the yachtsman and his book with a pseudo-scientific air.

Neither at Yokohama, nor at Hamerfest, is seen another curious yachting type, the Yachtsman who is yachtless. Mr. Soapy Sponge having undergone a sea change into a creature, if not rich, yet strange, is found most commonly at Erith, at Gravesend, and sometimes as far away as Southsea or Cowes. There is no doubt about his make-up or his conversation. Both bespeak the unmistakable "salt." His rig—personal, of course, for he is boatless—is perfect. In foul weather or in fair he dresses the part exactly. Not a crease is awry, not a button out of place. In tarpaulin or in serge, in straw or in sou'-wester, his lines are copied from the best models. He is every inch a yachtsman—to look upon and to listen to. He will discourse by the yard upon the occult mysteries of measurement, he is profound on every variety of rig, and is a keen critic of sailing-masters. His memory is prodigious. He can tell under what conditions of wind and tide the Mudlark beat the Seaslug five seasons ago, and can explain exactly what effect the lengthening of the former famous cutter will have upon her pace. He can tell his friends where and in what company to enter their boats so as to win a prize, and he condescends in the kindest manner possible to potter about in their craft. He is fond of loafing about Woolwich and Shoeburyness in nautical négligé, and is supposed by his admirers to understand all about gunnery and the war-ships of the future. He is, in fact, an authority on everything nautical, from the Inflexible to the Whitehead torpedo. Second only to his technical knowledge are his social powers. He can sing and accompany himself on the pianoforte, and is therefore popular with yachtswomen ; and, being supposed to inspire the newspapers on naval matters, is looked upon respectfully by the men. It is true that his popularity seldom lasts beyond a cruise, but this affects him little, as every change of host supplies him with an addition to the long list of stories which confirm his reputation as an amusing man. He is soon the guest of another yachtsman, and then his old jokes and funny stories come out afresh, garnished with minute and interesting particulars concerning the host of yesterday, and the frank enjoyment and cordiality of his new friends warm, as it were, the cold shoulder of the old.

Allied to the saline species of the

genus are two varieties of the river yachtsman. One of these is not altogether of the sea, nor yet of the river, being, even as the lordly salmon, found by turns in fresh, in brackish, and in salt water. His range may be said to extend from Albemarle-street to Southsea. At each of these places he has a snug retreat, and in winter, when his yacht is laid up, he passes a vast quantity of time in talking and reading about yachts in his snug clubhouse. He is a genuine yachtsman enough and a good fellow, often a naval officer on the retired list, sometimes an enriched merchant commander, not unfrequently an engineer, now and then a surgeon. His favourite course is from Gravesend round the Mouse Light and back, and on the occasion of the great annual matches he carries the hospitality of the yachtsman to the extremest limits. He is not as a rule a dandy, as is the second variety just alluded to, the true freshwater sailor for whom the Thames enters the German Ocean at Westminster Bridge. The up-river yachtsman and his boat are beautiful to look upon, and his skill is mainly shown in dodging fishing-punts in narrow waters, and in getting through lock-pounds without giving the ladies, by whom he is almost invariably accompanied, the slightest alarm. Yet beneath that smooth exterior oft burns a wild ambition to become a member of a yacht club, to dare the perils of Lea Reach, nay, to venture beyond the Nore itself, and brave the billows of the Channel. Unhappily, ambition sometimes takes another shape, and the freshwater sailor forsakes his white-winged craft for a fussy, puffing, snorting, aggressive steam-launch, with which he desecrates the leafy splendour of Cliefden and the placid beauty of Pangbourne and Goring. The excuse for a steam-launch is that it is "so comfortable for ladies"—that is to say, for dames who love a vessel on an even keel, and are not insensible to the charms of luncheon, begun with hot soup and tapered off with sandwiches of foies gras. These up-river beauties are of another race from the charming yachtswomen now blooming—not alone—in the summer seas of the Isle of Wight. Even at Cowes itself, the possession of a superb series of yachting costumes does not always connote the accomplished yachtswoman. I am credibly informed by my aunt, that of the multitude of England's fair daughters who

make the pier at Cowes a thing of beauty during the present month, only a small proportion go afloat. From personal observation I am inclined to agree with my aunt, the aim of the true yachtswoman apparently being to trample on the pride of millinery with the greater pride evolved from a minute acquaintance with nautical mysteries. The yachtswoman who has been on a cruise or two, if not quite to Jerusalem and Madagascar, yet to the Orkneys and the Mediterranean, affects—while afloat *bien entendu*—to be "quite" the female sailor. She professes to like dirty weather. As the breeze freshens she loves to don her tarpaulin, and shrinks not if hands communicating at the other end with long muscular arms and a six-foot specimen of male humanity aid her in getting on her rough-weather wraps.

There is little or no affectation about the yachtswoman, save in the matter of nautical acquirement. She is especially proud of her skill in boxing the compass, will take her "trick" at the tiller, or "take a sight" as well as the smartest of midshipmen. Moreover, she is weather-wise, and can appraise the promise of a "bit of blue" or of a cloud no bigger than a man's hand, to a nicety, and with due reference to the quarter of the wind. She is uncomplaining under adverse circumstances, and bears the "wild north-easter" and the sirocco with equal serenity. Only those who have cruised with the genuine yachtswoman can truly appreciate her. The conditions of yachting incline, perhaps, to make her somewhat overmuch bon camarade, and to promote a frankness—not to say loudness—of tone. Her detractors assert that she can, and under extreme circumstances will, "swear like a trooper." She must know how to "cuss," for while in harbour she hears perchance much rough language; but I solemnly affirm, with my hand on Hunt's Yachting Magazine, that I have never heard her exhibit her proficiency in this branch of nautical learning.

A notice of yachting types would be incomplete without mention of the Yachting Secretary, not unfrequently an ex-military officer—for in what position in the world, from that of a policeman to that of a wine-merchant, is the ex-soldier not found? The perfect yachting secretary is a mysterious and impenetrable personage, who shrouds himself in mystery, and never knows anything save officially.

Another type, but a very variable one, is the sailing-master, who, except when he has to deal with a practised hand, worries and tyrannises over the man who pays him and obeys him. Over the young yachtsman he exercises absolute sway; and the list of alterations and additions a boat requires when a new sailing-master comes into power throws Leporello's "catalogo" completely into the shade. As a rule he finds fault with everything; but if told curtly to make the best of it by "one who knows," accepts the inevitable, kindly enough. Towards one who doesn't know he naturally entertains the same feeling that an accomplished chef has for a master who "does not care what he eats"—a compound of pity, toleration, and contempt. It cannot, however, be denied that he knows his business, and is often the beau ideal of a sailor. Allowance being made for degree, equal commendation may be given to his crew, generally composed of men carefully picked and trained to smart work under all conditions of wind and weather. Quickness of hand and eye are indispensable to the yachting crew, who must not only know what to do, but how to do it quickly and effectually in the face of one of those accidents which are perpetually occurring in a sailing-match. It is not too much to say that perhaps the best seamanship in the world is shown upon our yachting fleet.

#### STORM AND HAIL.

WHILE a science is still young—in the condition of meteorology at the present day—it is not enough to enunciate accurate ideas, the result of observation or experiment. There is an adversary to be first put down in the shape of false notions, derived from impressions immediately made on our senses, and adopted without question by every preceding generation. They reach us with all the authenticity of an heirloom supported by innumerable attestations—which attestations, in fact, are nothing more than an indefinite repetition of the same sensations, produced by the same phenomena upon identical organs. A plausible and pardonable mistake becomes a prejudice; and prejudice, with time, ripens into venerable and world-wide belief. We need only refer to that article of the popular creed—an optical illusion accepted as fact—which teaches that so-called "waterspouts" pump up water

from the sea, until it reaches and fills the clouds.\*

Vulgar errors of that class are excusable; for the first care of most human beings is how to obtain their daily bread. Until this is assured, they can have little either of leisure or relish for the contemplation of natural phenomena. Nevertheless, everybody knows what a tempest is, while many are forewarned by the nervous uneasiness and oppression which announce its coming. Everybody has heard the crash of thunder, seen the sharp, quick glare of lightning, and felt the pelting of grape-shot hail. But it does not thence follow that anybody has really observed a tempest.

M. Faye—on whose valuable notice *Sur les Orages et sur la Formation de la Grêle*, the present paper is based—draws a distinction between seeing and observing. Here are two very different states of mind into which the occurrence of nature's grander spectacles may throw the person who witnesses them. He will either fall into a purely passive state, simply receiving impressions, often deep and terrible, which his imagination immediately accounts for by some preconceived notion; or he will be roused into an active mood which, casting aside first impressions, resolves to investigate the phenomena themselves, to discover by strict search their nature and origin, or to make out what they are by experiments logically planned and undertaken. It is the active frame of mind only which constitutes science, whilst the passive state gives rise to no more than sentiments of poetic admiration, superstitious terrors, or prejudices.

In respect to tempests, men had advanced no farther than the passive state of mind up to the commencement of the seventeenth century; for modern science can reckon from no earlier date. Before that time, the stream of human knowledge was blocked by an inert mass of floating weeds, the accumulated growth of popular ignorance. Unreasoning prejudice constituted the grand obstacle to science; it veiled the meaning of the most decisive phenomena, and literally closed men's eyes when they had clear evidence of facts before them. The history of science is not confined to its discoveries. That history, to be complete, should also comprise the erroneous beliefs which so long fettered its march, and which even now sometimes lead us astray.

\* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 14, p. 449, "Waterspouts."

For the simple spectator (the observer is out of court at present) who watches, not without secret apprehension, what is passing overhead, a thunderstorm is a local fact; and its assumed restricted locality is one of the causes of its being misunderstood. He takes it for a drama got up on the spot and isolated amidst the ordinary fluctuations of the atmosphere. Every tempest is preceded by precursory symptoms, which constitute its prologue. The sky is still bright, the winds are silent; but the calm is heavy and the heat stifling. Ill-omened clouds appear on the horizon; gradually they mount to the zenith and pass beyond it without apparent cause, for not a breath of air is stirring below. The heavens are darkened; the low growl of distant thunder is heard. The sky is soon completely overclouded, and the storm bursts forth in all its fury. The wind rises, blowing in violent gusts and squalls. The clouds, transpierced by celestial fires, pour forth torrents of rain; or hail falls noisily, cutting and smashing all that it touches; whilst the lightning seems to select its prey, and then darts from heaven to give the fatal blow. After a time, the flashes and the peals of thunder slacken in force and frequency; the thick clouds appear to dissolve; with the return of calm, refreshing coolness overspreads the face of nature.

It is an old drama, but never fails to startle by its strange and wonderful sublimity. The whole action seems concentrated on one spot and speedily to reach its dénouement there. Every tragic element is present; surprise, terror, irresistible fatality, smitten victims who, says popular superstition, are doubtless guilty. It is a subject for poets, painters, and musicians, whose treatment of it has won for them just admiration. But all this is a mere matter of sensations and impressions, making not the slightest approach to science. Our spectator is a purely passive being. If he thinks at all, his thought is that the drama has been played for him or his. Immortal darts which strike, burn, and kill, without visible projectile, could, in old times, only be hurled by a divinity. Jupiter Tonans held in his hand a sheaf of thunderbolts, to punish, warn, or overawe mortals.

To be an observer instead of a spectator, one must rise above this passive state of mind. And the most ordinary observer, once freed from prejudice, will first ask whence came all those clouds which rose from the horizon to the zenith. He will

note their direction, and then go and enquire, within another horizon several miles off, what happened there whilst the tempest here was only coming on. He will do the same in the direction towards which the thunder-clouds went away; and assuredly he will soon discover that the storm was not local, did not originate on the spot where he dwells, and consequently was not intended for him alone, nor stirred up on his account, for his special entertainment, reward, or punishment. But in former days, such an investigation of grand natural phenomena would have been called "presumption;" and even now equivalent terms are applied to scientific enquiry by those who would hold the human mind enslaved. We cannot too often reassert the fact, that tempests do not originate on the spot over which they burst and rage.

One branch of our subject, namely, lightning and thunder, themselves supply an excellent example of the mode in which natural philosophy attains its ends. The ancients had observed, without bestowing much thought about it, a curious property of the bits of amber brought by adventurous sailors from the shores of the North Sea; which property, electricity, derives its name in consequence from *ηλεκτρον*, amber. But when observation and experiment began to bring forth real science, it was found that electricity could be obtained by the very same process, i.e. friction, from substances much less rare than amber. At the same time scientists discovered the conducting power of metals, in opposition to the isolating powers of amber, resin, and glass. Next, they succeeded in accumulating, in metal, the electricity developed by friction from the latter objects. After persevering and varied trials, a continuous supply of electricity was obtained, until the first spark flew off from a conductor. Could this be a microscopic form of lightning? The luminous hint was followed up.

But to establish the identity of the two phenomena, lightning had to be brought down and manipulated, before they could be sure that it was absolutely the same agent as that produced by rubbing a bit of amber on your coat-sleeve. In obedience to which requirement of inductive science, electricity was extracted from the clouds. In the United States, Franklin flew his famous kite; in France, Romas and Dalibard planted pointed metallic conductors on the tops of the loftiest edifices; both proving that the clouds are vast

reservoirs of electricity, and that lightning is identical with the small crackling spurts of light which the lecturer is able to exhibit to his audience. Those experiments moreover gave us lightning-conductors, which save our buildings from destruction—except in one case, when concentrated electricity assumes a most singular and remarkable form, to be noted shortly.

The first storm seriously studied to any purpose was the memorable tempest of July 13, 1788, which carried destruction with it across a portion of Western Europe, and which excited so much interest in the French Academy of Sciences that it delegated one of the members, the Abbé Tessier, assisted by Messieurs Buache and Leroi, to draw up a report. This report, illustrated by maps of the country ravaged, could hardly be better done at the present day. We should now give, with fuller details, the movements of the barometer before, during, and after the storm; but, in 1788, that instrument's close connection with atmospheric phenomena was yet unknown.

The maps show two bands, almost parallel to each other, along which hail fell. Between them, and on each side outside them, are three stripes visited only by rain. What is clear, admitting not the slightest doubt, is that from the Touraine to Flanders and Brabant at the very least—that is, over a distance of a hundred leagues, or nearly three hundred miles—the two bands of hail kept constantly separate, although with an inconstant interval varying from three to seven and a half leagues, and thereby giving an average intermediate distance of five and a quarter leagues. The varying breadth of the two hail-bands united gives an average breadth of six-and-a-half leagues. From less precise information, it is all but certain that the length of the bands, both ways, was greater than is stated above. The direction of the storm was from south-west to north-east. Southwards, it was felt in the Saintonge, on the borders of the Bay of Biscay; and to the north, after leaving Flanders, it traversed Holland, sweeping beyond the Texel.

The darkness consequent on the storm was compared to a total eclipse of the sun. There was great disagreement respecting the size of the hailstones; according to the public papers, some of them weighed as much as eight or ten French pounds—doubtless a great exaggeration. M. Tessier, who happened to be in the middle of the

easterly band, confirms the testimony of trustworthy persons (who took the precaution to measure and weigh the hailstones immediately after they fell) that amongst them there were very large ones; some regular in shape, almost spherical, from one to three inches in diameter; others irregular, like branching stalactites, or tending to an octahedral form, or merely lumps of ice. The largest actual measurement did not give hailstones of half a pound.

The size of hailstones is often compared with that of pigeons', hens', or turkeys' eggs. According to Tessier's experiments, a hailstone as big as a pigeon's egg weighs (approximately in English avoirdupois) a quarter of an ounce; as big as a hen's egg, two ounces; as a turkey's, three ounces. In other storms, hailstones must have been heavier than this, killing partridges and even hares in the fields. At Nemours, in 1839, many sheep died in consequence of contusions inflicted by hailstones on the 10th of October in that year. The present writer has seen an Italian city unroofed, all the tiles having been smashed by hailstones.

People were pretty well agreed as to the time during which hail fell in each locality along the course of the storm of 1788. Long as it appeared to the sufferers, it only lasted seven or eight minutes at most. But the quantity fallen made up for the brevity of the fall. At Étampes, in the eastern band, the hail was two-and-a-half feet thick in the corners of buildings exposed to the wind, and took three days afterwards to melt. The noise it made in falling was said to be as if millions of walnuts had been shot out from the clouds.

M. Faye's theory of hail is briefly this. First, all storms are atmospheric whirlpools of varying dimensions, often so vast and enormous that the arc of their circumference which passes over a given district appears to the observers there to be a straight line. Secondly, the revolving motion of whirlpools, whether in water or in air, has a downward tendency. In popular language, all whirlpools suck in things till they reach the very bottom, as is only too well known to swimmers and sailors. The curve described by an object drawn into a whirlpool is not a circle (because then it would only go round and round, remaining always at the same level), but a conical spiral gradually diminishing downwards, resembling a corkscrew whose upper twists should be

larger and wider than those towards the point. In this way, a dead leaf, caught by a circling eddy, spins round and round, sinking lower and lower in the watery funnel, till it is whisked to the bottom, makes a plunge, and disappears. Thirdly, the upper regions of the atmosphere are excessively cold. The highest clouds which float there, cirri or mare's-tails, are composed of minute ice-spicules, as aeronauts can prove by pinching experience. These ice-spicules and this intensely cold air and vapour, drawn down to the lower strata of the atmosphere by aerial whirlpools, condense and freeze the moisture with which they find the air there perhaps saturated. Exactly as a cold bottle brought up from a cellar causes the vapour in a warm room to settle on it in the form of dew, so each ice-spicule attracts and freezes the moisture in the warmer clouds which the whirlwind penetrates, and so becomes the nucleus of a hailstone. We see that dust and sand, raised by eddies of wind in our roads and streets, are held in suspension, while being carried hither and thither by the whirling gusts before they fall to the ground. During a hurricane, bulky and heavy objects fly about in the air like feathers. In like manner, the infant hailstones, born perhaps of flakes of fine snow, while performing their rapid merry-go-round, increase by the addition of frozen vapour, or unite and are cemented into a single mass, until they finally reach the earth as monster hail or shapeless lumps of ice.

Again; if we stand on a bridge during a flood and especially after a break-up of ice which still partially clogs the stream, we shall see that the little whirlpools formed in the water after its passage between the piers of the bridge, continue whirling and whirling without subsiding into smooth water, until they have followed the current of the stream quite out of sight. Just so, aerial whirlpools pursue their course unbroken for enormous distances. Their path is marked by a band of hailstones, or the effects of an irresistible hurricane, or perhaps only of torrential rain. And, as in the case of floods we may watch two or more small whirlpools travelling downstream side by side; so may we have to deplore the devastation of a district by two or more hail-discharging or tree-uprooting tornadoes, each pursuing a distinct and separate, but almost parallel, line of progression.

A more puzzling phenomenon is seen in

globular lightning—the balls of fire which have sometimes been actually observed to descend slowly from the clouds. On approaching the ground, they seem to avoid alighting on it, but move about in various directions, and then either rise in the air and disappear, or burst with a loud report if they encounter any obstacle. Sometimes these fire-balls will enter rooms, coming down a chimney, perhaps, and going out again by an open door or window without touching anything. They have no resemblance to lightning proper or to electric sparks, but rather to a spherical and gaseous Leyden phial, charged internally and externally with opposite electricities, whose sudden recombination is determined by the slightest shock. Their density cannot differ much from that of air, since they wander about indifferently upwards or downwards, backwards or forwards, nor is their course influenced by ordinary electrical attractions.

M. Faye explains their formation by the fact that whirlwinds and waterspouts are vast conductors which bring down the cirri and the electricity of the upper regions. As the tension of the so-called fluid is greatest at the points of ordinary conductors, so it is at the small end of waterspouts. The mist formed by their apparent sheath is thrown off at the rapidly gyrating extremity, like an overgrown soap-bubble, charged with condensed electricity without and within. The practical point connected with fireballs is that they are in no wise attracted by lightning-conductors. Fortunately, their effects being much weaker than those of ordinary lightning, they do not give great cause for alarm. Nevertheless, to render powder magazines completely secure, besides the usual precaution of fixing conductors which dip into a pond or stream, every aperture should be carefully closed on the approach of a tempest. Otherwise, an unsuspected sort of lightning may quietly steal in, stretching itself out lengthwise like a worm, if need be, through a very small hole, exploding inside and occasioning disaster.

There are regions where tempests are so frequent and fierce as to make any port welcome in a storm. Two generals, coming from Lima, were traversing together a pass of the Andes. Their mules were slow-paced, perhaps through fatigue. Suddenly, a shower of hail rattled round them; lightning darted incessantly; the very earth, provoked by the contact of

clouds, flashed forth fire in answer to them. The wind blew with such violence that the travellers feared they would be swept away, mules and all. They looked about for shelter, but none was to be seen. Their path followed the brink of a small mountain lake.

"If we were to get into the water," said one, "we should be less exposed to the gale and the lightning. What do you think of it?"

"A capital idea!" replied the other. "Of two evils, we must choose the least."

Dismounting, into the water they walked, until up to their necks. Two minutes afterwards, they had the satisfaction of seeing both their mules killed by an electrical discharge. On emerging after the storm from their liquid retreat, they had to travel, wet, on foot, and supperless, several leagues to reach a human habitation. History relates that, on looking in a glass, they found their hair had turned not gray, but white.

## DOUBLEDAY'S CHILDREN.

BY DUTTON COOK,

AUTHOR OF "YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE," "HOBSON'S CHOICE," &c. &c.

BOOK V. THE FURTHER NARRATIVE OF BASIL DOUBLEDAY.

### CHAPTER III. CRITICISM.

THE fact was not gratifying; but the profits produced by my translation of *L'Oncle de ma Tante* were greatly in excess of the pecuniary rewards obtained by my poetical works. In truth, poetry continued to be "a drug in the market;" whereas, farce flourished wonderfully. Madame Vivienne entrusted me with other plays of the like class to operate upon. "You see," she explained, "the man we usually get to do these things for us has gone rather out of his mind. He can't even be trusted now to look out words in the French dictionary. Some say it's drink, some say it's debt, and some say it's because of the bad conduct of his wife. But I shouldn't think it's that. He must have translated too many French plays to take that sort of thing much to heart." I produced English versions of the well-known vaudevilles, *La Blanchisseuse Mystérieuse*, *L'Ours et le Perroquet*, and *Qui Dort Dine*. I should state that the success obtained by these productions was greatly due to the exertions of Collarby, the popular low comedian, and to the exquisite

singing of Madame Vivienne. One of her songs—it was entitled *Clever Little Cupid*—especially pleased the public.

I was not proud of my success, but the money I received was very welcome to me. Nick professed to be indignant on the subject; not so much that he was opposed to my making money, but he thought it highly objectionable that money should be made in such wise. Why not make money as other people do by means of trade, he demanded? He could not be made to understand that translating plays from the French was a sort of trade. Really, it was hardly respectable, he urged. I did not contradict him. But I perceived him one night in the boxes laughing greatly, though with an air of protest all the while, at the humorous exploits of Collarby.

I saw Mr. Leveridge from time to time. He looked older, and his face had acquired a careworn expression; but he had recovered his calmness, and even a measure of his old pleasant blitheness of manner.

"You must not shrink from speaking to me about Doris," he said earnestly. "Remember that, my dear boy; I am always anxious to hear of her, and to hear good news. I may not hope to see her—not yet. Although, in the time to come, I do not doubt that we shall meet again, and that she will be able to look with kindness upon her old fond friend—with kindness and forgiveness. I was greatly to blame. But if you knew how I have sorrowed, you would, as she would, think of me tenderly and compassionately. Do not fear any renewal of the old folly—the old madness—the old wickedness, I may almost call it. Doris is to me but as a dearly-loved daughter—the child of my age. Speak to me of her, Basil. There is still something of magic to me in the mention of her name. Tell me that she is well, that she is happy. And this M. Riel, her husband. She loves him very much? But, of course she does; it was not merely to escape me that she fled with him. No, no, she would not have done that. She loves him, without doubt. And he—he is kind to her?"

I suppose he read upon my face some dislike of these questions.

"I should not ask such things, I know—I know. Of course, he is kind to her—he could not but be kind to her. No one could. But what has he ever done to deserve the happiness of winning my Doris? Ah, it's a fine thing to own an Antinous face! Confound the fellow, with his youth and his good looks. What does poverty matter under such circumstances? For

they are poor, Basil—they are very poor. You need not trouble yourself to deny it."

I did not deny it. I simply did not want to discuss the matter with him.

"Because I know all about it, much more than you think I know; they are poor, they must be poor, they can't help being poor. But, as I said, what does poverty matter when we are young and happy? It can't matter very much, if the poverty doesn't go beyond a certain point. But people must live, you know; they must have money wherewith to buy food and firing—or else—well, you know, Basil, or else it's the very devil and all! There can be no happiness where there's no dinner—where the larder's empty, and the kitchen fire's out. Basil, do you know what Doris has been doing?"

"What has she been doing?"

"She has been selling her drawings in the Burlington-arcade. She has been pawning her jewels, poor dear little soul. How do I know? Because I've watched her—because I can't help watching her. I'm drawn to her, I hover about her, as a moth about a candle. Only I'm an old moth, a burnt moth, and I dread the flame. I don't go too near it. Yet I have been near to her, very near sometimes. She doesn't know—she has never suspected—how near, how very near. I could have touched her; if she had turned she would have been face to face with me. But she did not turn; she never gave me a thought; she was too much occupied with her husband, with her happiness, yes, and with her poverty. And she pawned her jewels, poor child, pawned them or sold them, I'm not sure which, to buy bread, I suppose, for herself and her Frenchman. How could he let her do it? Has he no love for her? Has he no respect for himself? He should rather have worked till he dropped, than have suffered such a thing. But I don't want to say a word against him. Only, I don't think he likes work very much; or perhaps he could not get work. I would have helped him, of course, but he felt, no doubt, that he couldn't come to me. He thinks of me as of an enemy, I daresay, and Doris thinks so too, perhaps. No, no, she wouldn't do that—she wouldn't do that; she must know me better than that. Basil, I so want to help Doris and her husband, but I don't know how—I don't know how."

I could not tell him how.

"You think me wrong for prying and peeping about so? I should have locked myself up in my studio, and tried to forget

the whole business. I should have put Doris and all thought of her far from me, and turned my back upon my folly, as people call it, for ever. It's easy to say that. How good, and wise, and happy, and contented we should all be if we could only do what other people tell us to do! But it can't be, you know. We are the best judges of the burthen, who have to bear it on our backs. We may shift it and shift it, according to the advice of the bystanders, but there is no making it lighter, do what we may with it. I am an old fool. I suppose that's past doubt. Everybody says so, at any rate. And I can't expect sympathy or pity. An old man in love! It's absurd, isn't it? He should know better at his time of life. Let us throw yet another stone at the old dotard before we pass on."

I felt for him, especially when he went on to tell me that his faith in his art had declined, that his hand had lost its cunning, that painting was no longer the happiness it had once been to him. He confessed that sometimes he sat for hours before his easel, but could not bring himself to touch the canvas with his brush. "Othello's occupation's gone!" he said, with a weary smile and something like the ghost of his old cheeriness. And then he mentioned that a new anxiety troubled him. Miss Leveridge was seriously ill. "She's been playing with illness all her life, but it is something more and worse than play this time." The doctors, it seemed, hinted at paralysis, but refrained from open declaration on the subject. She might recover, it was thought; but her constitution was feeble and age weighed heavily upon her. "Poor Deborah," continued Mr. Leveridge, "she's led but an ailing and sad-coloured life. I don't think she's ever known what it is to be quite happy herself, and perhaps she's never done very much to make other people happy. And yet she's a good woman, too; and she's meant well always, and she owns a kinder heart and a more affectionate disposition, than she's ever had credit for. She's been a dear good sister to me, though she never cared for my pictures, and was always, I think, a little afraid of and shocked at me. I shall miss her terribly. She hasn't been what you'd call a comfort to me or to anyone, but it has done me good having her to think about, and provide for, and protect. She had my welfare and happiness always at heart. She was grievously offended with poor Doris—very angry with her, indeed.

It was no use my saying a word; it arose from her sisterly affection for me. I couldn't well scold her for that, you know. Poor Deborah! she never knew or suspected it, but every word she spoke against Doris fell like a lash upon my heart. She could not understand that Doris was not to blame for not loving me, for preferring another's love to mine. It was hard to sit still and hear poor Doris abused and accused, but Deborah would not listen to a word in her defence. And she seemed to think she could best show her love for me by making very clear her hatred of Doris. But as I said before, she has always meant well, has Deborah. It's sad to think that she should be so weakly and suffering! I hope for the best, but sometimes hope seems to have died out of my heart. I grow old, Basil, and very, very sad."

He addressed me under some restraint, I think. He found it difficult to speak with patience of Doris's husband, and yet he felt that he was not likely to judge him impartially. Can one ever be quite fair to a favoured and successful rival? He seemed really anxious, however, to mention M. Riel only with temper and moderation. "He's her husband, and she loves him. I must always remember that," he would say sometimes. It was with some indignation, however, he learnt that Doris was really to appear upon the stage.

"The pity of it—the pity of it," he repeated again and again; "and her husband permits it! Is he mad? Has he no heart? Does he know what he is doing? Doris an actress! Has it come to that? And why—why does she do this thing? To earn money to buy bread withal! And I am powerless in the matter! I am rich—at least, the world so counts me—and yet I may not say, 'Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond!' Basil, this thing should not be. Is there no way to prevent it?"

"There is no way," I said. For I knew Doris's resoluteness, and that all attempt to stay her would be in vain. I knew, too, how much there was to commend in her conduct, how worthy was her motive. I applauded her courage and her cleverness, though, in truth, I regretted as much as did Mr. Leveridge the necessity that made her an actress.

"She's brave enough, of course," he said, "and clever enough. I never questioned that; but she should be too clever to do such a thing as this. My Doris—our Doris on the stage! Her mother's daughter an actress! Poor child! poor

child! She has no notion of the sort of life she is entering upon. Oh yes, she may succeed. She is so singularly beautiful; there's such a wondrous charm about her; the public will be very foolish indeed if it doesn't applaud her greatly, if it doesn't fall straightway in love with her. But does Doris need a success of that kind? The stage is a miserable career for a woman. It hardens, and coarsens, and soils, and unsexes her. It's a miry road; there's no journeying upon it without getting splashed and sullied. And what travelling companions! What greasy shoulders she must rub against! What grimy hands she must grasp! Is there no way to prevent it, Basil, I ask again? Is there no way to prevent it?"

"There is no way," I repeated.

Mr. Leveridge fretted, and chafed, and fumed. All the same, Doris made her first appearance upon the stage.

I was very anxious on her account. I was, I think, even more nervous and agitated than she was. I shared, in some degree, Mr. Leveridge's opinions on the subject. And yet I held the histrionic art in far higher regard. Apparently, he could see only its prosaic side; would scarcely admit, indeed, that it owned any poetic qualities whatever. An artist himself, he seemed unable to estimate fairly the value of an art varying from his own. He could not consider the theatre, he was so engrossed in taking count of the dust and stains upon its boards.

I cannot pretend to enter upon a calm and deliberate criticism of Doris's performance. My own interest in it was so deep as to perplex me greatly. I mistrusted my own powers of judgment; they were thrown out of balance, as it were, by my personal and private interest in the cause. But I have often thought that Doris underrated her own gifts and accomplishments as an actress. Because she was adopting the profession of the stage with a view to its pecuniary rewards, she judged herself to be incapable of the loftier and more inspiring emotions that have carried the great players to triumph. Yet she had many genuine qualifications for theatrical success. I need say no more about her beauty; that, perhaps, asserted itself less distinctly upon the stage than I had expected. But she was singularly graceful of movement and gesture; she enlisted sympathy in a special degree; an air of refinement and intelligence invariably attended her; while her voice was of firm quality and full of

music. As a child she had been mercurial and vivacious even to the tips of her fingers, and she possessed a curious power of abandoning herself to the enthusiasm and excitement of the minute. There was to my—perhaps prejudiced—thinking, something of intense life, of quick sensitiveness, of poetic fervour, of feverish passion about her acting I have noted in the acting of few other actresses. And be it understood that she was seen under very great disadvantages. Certain discomforts of dress I knew nothing of at the time—they were not, I think, perceived by the audience, however embarrassing they may have been to her; but the feeling of stage-fright that for a time afflicted her almost paralysed her efforts. And she was very indifferently supported; indeed, she was greatly hindered by the incompetence of her play-fellows. Mr. Toomer Hooton might be a well-skilled elocutionist, but, as an actor, he seemed to me simply detestable. He was a sort of treasury of stage tricks and artifices of the worst kind—an example of all the faults he should have instructed his pupils to avoid.

"You wouldn't think," said Uncle Junius, "that he was a decoy duck, to induce people to take to the stage, would you? I should call him a scarecrow, to frighten folks away. Yet he's very well pleased with himself; and what a comfort that is! He amuses everybody; sets us all laughing, and he doesn't know it. Why, it's almost like doing good by stealth!"

Mr. Leveridge was at the theatre on the night of Doris's performance, although he had vowed, again and again, that nothing should induce him to go near the place—that he should be too seriously hurt, too deeply offended. All the same, he had secured a private box in case he should change his mind, or, as he protested, merely because he wished to patronise the performance.

"Wonderfully clever," he said, "wonderfully clever; I've seen nothing like it since Miss O'Neill. I couldn't have believed our Doris was so clever. How could she possibly cram all those long-winded speeches into her poor little head? What an effort of memory! Why, you know, when she was a little girl she couldn't be persuaded to learn her lessons upon any terms. I am quite taken by surprise. All

the same, you know, I'd sooner, by a thousand pounds, that the thing hadn't taken place at all. It grieves me to see her do it, for all she does it so cleverly and so prettily. She was terribly frightened at first, poor child. It made me cry to look at her scared face, and to see her tremble so. But she's better now, she's very much better, her courage is coming back to her. And now I'm crying because it's so pathetic, and I can't separate Julia from Doris, and her voice is so plaintive, and she seems so broken-hearted, poor child; and I can't persuade myself that it isn't true, that it's only pretence, and that the darling isn't really plunged deep into sorrow and suffering! But one thing is very certain, she's an amazing actress, quite amazing!"

It was certain, too, that Mr. Leveridge was a very prejudiced critic.

On the morning after the performance, I hastened to Doris's lodgings. I was very anxious to hear that she was none the worse for her exertions. I desired, too, to know what had become of M. Riel. I had fully expected to see him at the theatre on the preceding evening; but unaccountably enough, he had not appeared. It was strange that, on such an occasion, he should have been absent. I felt that something serious must have happened.

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